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MEMORANDUM FOR: General Wilson

SUBJECT: Alerting and Warning Mechanisms

1. At the initial meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Alerting Memorandum, chaired by me on 19 September, several Committee members expressed reservations about the alerting concept on the grounds it would conflict with or duplicate functions which presumably would be the responsibility of a revitalized watch mechanism. An implication in their position was that the charter of the Watch Committee should be expanded to cover all warning, rather than be focused on strategic warning of enemy attack. As you are aware, Dr. Hall is pushing for the broader concept and CIA/DDI strongly supports the narrower concept. The issue will have to be addressed when the second (Watch) Ad Hoc Committee meets on 30 September.

2. It is our understanding that in our review of the warning function, the DCI is working from the following premises:

a. that warning is a responsibility of the community, not simply of a particular watch mechanism;

b. that responsibility for providing warning, at least for crisis situations short of military attack, should be focused more directly on the DCI to ensure more effective accountability;

c. that the bureaucratic mechanisms established to support him in this responsibility should be flexible and dynamic to avoid the kind of sterility that has overtaken the Watch Committee operation. (Indeed, Mr. Colby suggested the possibility of eliminating the watch mechanism altogether); and

d. that such warning mechanisms should be kept as small as possible and rely for support primarily on such existing elements of the community as operations centers and current intelligence offices.

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3. In proceeding with the work of the two Ad Hoc Committees, we propose to act on the basis of the foregoing premises. Because, however, of the basic conceptual differences which are apparent in the community on this whole question, we already doubt that it will be possible to achieve a consensus. We may thus end up with two distinctly different proposals to present to the DCI for his consideration.

4. We would like to discuss the IC Staff position on this issue with you and [] before we get much deeper into the work of the Ad Hoc Committee.

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Chief, PRD/IC

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